

Message Text

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SUBJECT: USSR MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE POLYANSKIY COMMENTS ON
SOVIET HARVEST

DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER
AND G&F DIVISION, FAS

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CARROLL G. BRUNTHAVER HAD
SEPARATE MEETINGS OCTOBER 3 WITH USSR MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
DMITRIY S. POLYANSKIY, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE
MIKHAIL R. KUZMIN, DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY
ALEKSANDR I. BELOZAROV, AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
BORIS A. RUNOV. THIS TELEGRAM SUMMARIZES MINISTER POLYANSKIY'S
REMARKS ON THE CURRENT HARVEST, THE LIVESTOCK SITUATION, AND HIS
REACTION TO SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE BUTZ'S INVITATION TO VISIT
THE UNITED STATES.

2. HARVEST SITUATION: ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER INTRODUCED
THIS SUBJECT BY CONGRATULATING MINISTER POLYANSKIY ON THE
GRAIN HARVEST WHICH SECRETARY-GENERAL BREZHNEV HAD CHARACTERIZED
AS "MASSIVE." MINISTER POLYANSKIY APPEARED TO BE TAKEN ABACK
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BY THIS STATEMENT. HE MENTIONED THE HARVESTING PROBLEMS CAUSED
BY RAIN AND SAID THAT HE "COULD NOT SAY THAT (THE HARVEST WAS
'MASSIVE'); IT IS STILL TOO EARLY." AT THIS POINT HE DEGREESSED
FROM THE SUBJECT OF GRAIN, REMARKING THAT THE PRODUCTION AND

PROCUREMENT OF ALL CROPS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN LAST YEAR -- ESPECIALLY COTTON. HIGH YIELDS OF SUGARBEETS, POTATOES, GRAPES, AND FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WERE NOTED. "ON THE WHOLE, THE HARVEST IS MORE SATISFACTORY (BLAGOPOLUCHNO) THAN LAST YEAR." HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT THE HARVEST WAS NOT YET COMPLETED; THE SUGARBEET HARVEST WOULD REQUIRE ANOTHER MONTH. RETURNING TO GRAIN, POLYANSKIY SAID "WE NEED TWO OR THREE WEEKS OF VERY GOOD WEATHER TO COMPLETE THE GRAIN HARVEST." CITING THE CLIMATIC STRINGENCIES TO WHICH SOVIET AGRICULTURE IS SUBJECTED, POLYANSKIY EXPLAINED THAT BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF THE SOVIET UNION, SOME AREAS WERE NOW EXPERIENCING SNOW WHILE IN OTHERS THE TEMPERATURE STOOD AT 15 DEGREES C (59 DEGREES F). HE REITERATED THAT MUCH EFFORT WAS STILL REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE HARVEST. REFERRING TO DEPUTY MINISTER RUNOV'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, HE SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IN AGRICULTURE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT TO HARVEST "UNDER ANY WEATHER CONDITIONS WITHOUT LOSSES."

3. SOVIET EXPERIENCE WITH U.S. HYBRID FEED GRAINS: RESPONDING TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER'S DISCUSSION OF CROP PRODUCTION IN THE U.S. THIS YEAR, MINISTER POLYANSKIY REMARKED THAT THE USSR HAD OBTAINED GOOD RESULTS WITH AMERICAN HYBRID CORN AND SORGHUM VARIETIES THIS YEAR. YIELDS WERE HIGHER THAN LOCAL VARIETIES, AND EVEN HIGHER THAN ANTICIPATED. BUT THE U.S. VARIETIES REQUIRED A LONGER GROWING SEASON, RIPENING 10 DAYS LATER THAN SOVIET VARIETIES.

4. SOVIET LIVESTOCK SECTOR REBOUNDS: FOLLOWING THE OPENING AFFORDED BY THE SUBJECT OF FEED GRAIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER INQUIRED AS TO THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR; DID HERDS INCREASE THIS YEAR? MINISTER POLYANSKIY REPLIED THAT LAST YEAR HAD BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR LIVESTOCK BECAUSE OF THE FEED SHORTAGE. NOT AS MANY ANIMALS WERE LOST AS HAD BEEN EXPECTED, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO "LOCAL INITIATIVE" OF FARMERS. THE USSR HAS, AT THIS TIME, TWO MILLION CATTLE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, INCLUDING ONE MILLION MORE COWS. THERE ARE ALSO MORE SWINE AND SHEEP AND "MUCH MORE" POULTRY. POLYANSKIY SAID THAT HE CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS REFERRING TO THE TOTAL HERD; NUMBERS IN THE SOCIALIZED SECTOR INCREASED, WHILE THOSE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR "DIMINISHED SOMEWHAT." MINISTER POLYANSKIY STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT PLANS FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PROCUREMENT OF MEAT, MILK, EGGS, AND WOOL WOULD BE "SIGNIFICANTLY OVERFULFILLED" THIS YEAR, AND THAT THE ORIGINAL TARGET FOR 1973 FORESEEN IN THE FIVE YEAR PLAN WOULD BE ATTAINED. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE STILL SOME "DIFFICULTIES" IN THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR; SPECIFICALLY, NOT ENOUGH POULTRY MEAT IS BEING PRODUCED.

5. MINISTER POLYANSKIY HEDGES ON VISIT TO U.S.: REFERRING TO SECRETARY BUTZ'S INVITATION TO MINISTER POLYANSKIY TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES, ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER EXPRESSED THE

HOPE THAT MINISTER POLYANSKIY AND SECRETARY BUTZ MIGHT CHAIR THE SECOND MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION IN WASHINGTON NEXT YEAR. MINISTER POLYANSKIY RESPONDED THAT "IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY WHEN WE WILL SEE EACH OTHER IN PERSON. THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS IN CONNECTION WITH THE HARVEST, AND THERE IS NO TIME NOW. IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE TIME TO EXCHANGE VISITS." ON DEPARTING, ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER REITERATED THAT SECRETARY BUTZ WAS ANXIOUS TO HAVE MINISTER POLYANSKIY VISIT THE U.S. MINISTER POLYANSKIY AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS THANKS TO SECRETARY BUTZ FOR HIS LETTER AND KIND INVITATION, AND SAID THAT "UNDER GOOD CONDITIONS I WILL COME."

6. COMMENT: MINISTER POLYANSKIY RECEIVED ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER AT 18:00 HOURS, NOMINALLY THE CLOSE OF THE WORK DAY. WHEN SECRETARY BRUNTHAVER DEPARTED DEPUTY MINISTER RUNOV'S OFFICE AT 15:45 -- AFTER A MEETING OF ALMOST TWO HOURS -- RUNOV ASSURED BRUNTHAVER THAT POLYANSKIY WAS MOST ANXIOUS TO SEE HIM. HE SAID THAT POLYANSKIY HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN A MEETING "AT THE KREMLIN" SINCE TWO O'CLOCK BUT THAT POLYANSKI WOULD SEE BRUNTHAVER SOMETIME THAT DAY OR EVENING. RUNOV PERSONALLY CALLED THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE AT THE MINISTRY OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY TO CONFIRM BRUNTHAVER'S APPOINTMENT WITH POLYANSKY. THE MEETING WITH MINISTER POLYANSKIY WAS FRIENDLY, AND POLYANSKIY WAS MOST CORDIAL -- AS WERE THE OTHER OFFICIALS VISITED BY BRUNTHAVER.

IT WAS EVIDENT FROM REMARKS BY BRUNTHAVER'S HOSTS THAT THE GIST OF HIS INTERESTS, AND OF THE MEETINGS, HAD BEEN RELAYED FROM ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTRY TO ANOTHER PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL FOR THE NEXT APPOINTMENT. MINISTER POLYANSKIY WAS FRIENDLY AND COURTEOUS, SELF-ASSURED, BUT FRANKLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE HARVEST. THE QUESTION OF HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES WAS SIDE-STEPPED, BUT NOT GRACEFULLY. HIS REMARKS AND DEMEANOR LED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT HE IS VITALLY CONCERNED -- VIRTUALLY TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALL OTHER MATTERS -- WITH THE "SUCCESSFUL" COMPLETION OF THE HARVEST, ESPECIALLY THE GRAIN HARVEST.
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